

RISHWORTH Urban Sanitary District.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1898.

THE RISHWORTH URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL,

GENTLEMEN,

In presenting my report for the year 1898, I cannot state that the health of the district has been good.

This has not been due to any cause that the Sanitary Authorities have it in their power to remedy by ordinary means, but for the most part from epidemics of infectious disease, which, from the nature of the dwellings and the ignorance of many of the people, in a district such as this, it has been difficult to stamp out though every means has been taken to do so. The epidemic of Scarlet Fever which had been existing since August, 1897, and which had attacked Rishworth comparatively slightly as far as the end of that year, greatly increased in the district at the beginning of 1898, and during January and February there were a considerable number of cases, and there were a good many cases of Measles also. In the Rishworth Grammar School there were some cases of

Scarlet Fever, but these were isolated and it was not considered necessary to break up the School. At the commencement of February there were a number of cases in the School of severe sore throat with fever, greatly resembling the sore throat of Scarlet Fever, and these cases continued throughout the month. No rash nor desquamation appeared in these cases. All possible causes of sore throat were investigated: the drinking-water was analysed and found to be perfectly pure. Acting on the supposition that these cases were due to some cause of infection about the School, the pupils were all sent home on the 28th February for a week, while the house was thoroughly fumigated and disinfected; there were no more cases after this in the School-house.

The Scarlet Fever continued during March and a number of hand-bills were printed, containing instructions for isolation, &c., and warning as to the Infectious Diseases Act, &c., these were left at each house in the district and distributed generally. There were two cases of Scarlet Fever in the head-master's house at the Rishworth Grammar School, and at the same time some cases of severe feverish sore throat, resembling that of Scarlet Fever, without rash or desquamation. The epidemic of Scarlet Fever continued more or less till the end of September.

There was a case of Typhoid Fever at Turner Bottom resulting in death. No cause of infection could be found in the patient's home, but as he worked among the rags in a paper-mill, and had been in rather low health, it was thought he had got the infection in that way. A boy died of Pneumonia at the Rishworth Grammar School in May.

There was a case of Dyptheria also in May, in one of the large houses in the district. There have been two cases of Erysipelas, one of which resulted in death.

There was a case of fracture of the ribs and perforation of the lung from goring by a bull.

The Deaths during the year have been 23 in number, 13 males and 10 females: 23 per thousand per annum, as compared with 15·3 per thousand per annum last year. The death rate is high for during 1897 about 300 navvies, ect., had left the district from the new waterworks, which were completed, leaving the population about 1000, but the actual number of deaths have been about the same this year as usual. This heavy death rate has been due to Lung disease principally and Contageous disease. It is worthy of note that there has only been one case of Typhoid Fever and one case of Dyptheria, the only cases of these diseases since I became Medical Officer of Health, and neither case could have arisen from any insanitary condition existing in the district in relation to the water supply or public drainage, ect., and I have known no case of disease to have arisen from such causes.

There has been only one death during the year among children under five years of age, and none under one year of age. This is remarkable, as there are usually a good number under one year.

The Births have been 26, *i.e.*, 10 males and 16 females, 26 per thousand per annum, as compared with 23 per thousand per annum last year.

The drainage at Turner Bottom has been improved and pipes laid down in place of an old stone drain. There was a complaint of a nuisance arising from the drain from Cuning Corner Inn flowing into a stream which passed through a field where cattle grazed. At the end of the year arrangements had been made to have this put right. No new Privies have been built, but one repaired at the Post Office.

The Sanitary Inspector reports that the Privies and Ash-pits have been cleaned out regularly; that the Dairies and Cow Sheds, ect., are all clean and in good condition and the latter white-washed once in the year.

There is no over-crowding and no smoke nuisance. The Water supply (from independent sources) seems most adequate and the water good.

The rainfall for the year at Thorpe was 40·34 inches.

I have the the honour to be,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

H. GREVILLE HUIE, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.